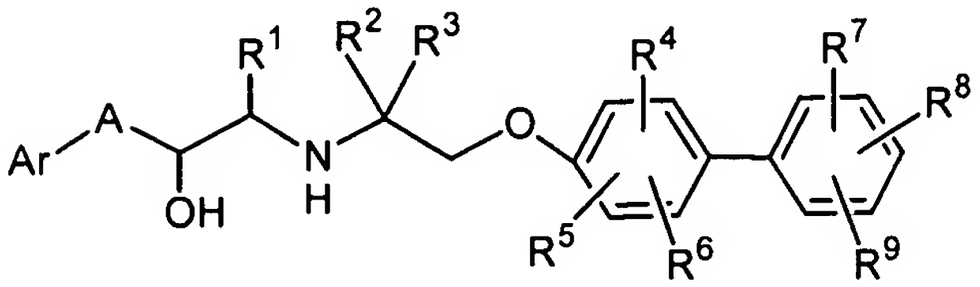
CLAIMS

1. A compound represented by general formula (I):



(I)

a prodrug thereof, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, wherein

R^1 is a hydrogen atom or a lower alkyl group;

each of R^2 and R^3 is independently a hydrogen atom or a lower alkyl group;

each of R^4, R^5 and R^6 is independently a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a lower alkyl group or a lower alkoxy group;

R^7 is a hydrogen atom or a lower alkyl group;

R^8 is a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a lower alkyl group, a lower alkoxy group, a cycloalkyl group, a heterocycloalkyl group, an aryl group, an aryloxy group, an aralkyloxy group, a heteroaryl group, a hydroxy-lower alkyl group, a hydroxy group, a di(lower alkyl)amino group, a cyclic amino group, a di(lower alkyl)amino-lower alkyl group, a lower acyl group, a lower alkylsulfanyl group, a lower alkylsulfonyl group, a carboxy group, a lower alkoxycarbonyl group or an aralkyloxycarbonyl group, or R^7 and R^8 are bonded together to form $-OCH_2O-$ or $-CH=CH-CH=CH-$;

R^9 is a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a lower alkyl group, a halo-lower alkyl group, a hydroxy-lower alkyl group, a hydroxy group, a lower alkoxy group, a cyano group, a lower alkylsulfonyl group, a lower alkylsulfonylamino group, $-COR^{10}$, $-A^1-COR^{10}$, or $-O-A^2-COR^{10}$;

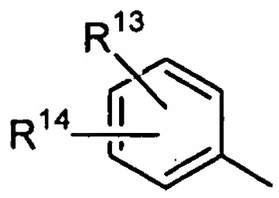
R^{10} is a hydroxy group, a lower alkoxy group or $-NR^{11}R^{12}$,

each of R^{11} and R^{12} is independently a hydrogen atom, a lower alkyl group, a carboxy-lower alkyl group or a lower alkoxycarbonyl-lower alkyl group, or R^{11} and R^{12}, together with the nitrogen atom to which they are bonded, form a cyclic amine;

A^1 is a lower alkylene group or a lower alkenylene group;

A^2 is a lower alkylene group;

Ar is a group represented by a formula:



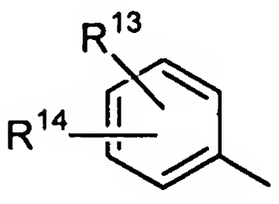
, or a heteroaryl group;

each of R^{13} and R^{14} is independently a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a lower alkyl group, a halo-lower alkyl group, a lower alkoxy group, a hydroxy group, a lower alkylsulfonylamino group or a lower acylamino group, or when R^{13} and R^{14} are adjacent each other, then R^{13} and R^{14} are bonded together to form a group represented by -NH-C(O)-NH-, provided that when one of R^{13} and R^{14} is a hydrogen atom, then the other is not a hydroxy group; and

A is a bond, $-OCH_2-$ or $-SCH_2-$.

2. The compound according to claim 1, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, wherein

Ar is a group represented by a formula:



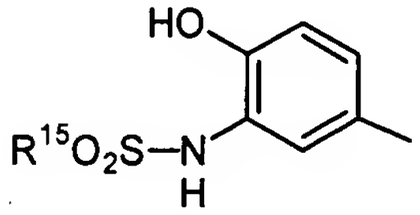
, or a pyridyl group;

each of R^{13} and R^{14} is independently a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a hydroxy group, a lower alkylsulfonylamino group

or a lower acylamino group, or when R^{13} and R^{14} are adjacent each other, then R^{13} and R^{14} are bonded together to form a group represented by -NH-C(O)-NH-.

3. The compound according to claim 1, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, wherein

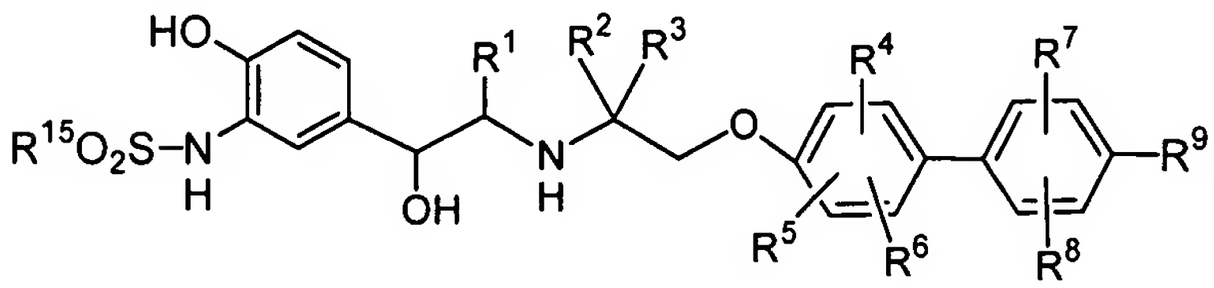
Ar is a group represented by a formula:



, in which R^{15} is a lower alkyl group; and

A is a bond.

4. A compound represented by general formula (II):



(II)

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, wherein

R^1 is a hydrogen atom or a lower alkyl group;

each of R^2 and R^3 is independently a hydrogen atom or a lower alkyl group;

each of R^4, R^5 and R^6 is independently a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a lower alkyl group or a lower alkoxy group;

R^7 is a hydrogen atom or a lower alkyl group;

R^8 is a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a lower alkyl group, a lower alkoxy group, a di(lower alkyl)amino group, a carboxy group, or a lower alkoxycarbonyl group;

R^9 is a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a lower alkyl group, a halo-lower alkyl group, a hydroxy-lower alkyl group, a hydroxy

group, a lower alkoxy group, a cyano group, a lower alkylsulfonyl group, a lower alkylsulfonylamino group, $-COR^{10}$, $-A^1-COR^{10}$, or $-O-A^2-COR^{10}$;

R^{10} is a hydroxy group, a lower alkoxy group or $-NR^{11}R^{12}$;

each of R^{11} and R^{12} is independently a hydrogen atom, a lower alkyl group, a carboxy-lower alkyl group or a lower alkoxycarbonyl-lower alkyl group, or R^{11} and R^{12}, together with the nitrogen atom to which they are bonded, form a cyclic amine;

A^1 is a lower alkylene group or a lower alkenylene group;

A^2 is a lower alkylene group; and

R^{15} is a lower alkyl group.

5. The compound according to claim 4, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, wherein

R^9 is $-COR^{10}$, or $-OCH_2COR^{10}$; and

R^{10} is a hydroxy group or a lower alkoxy group.

6. The compound according to claim 5, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, wherein at least one of R^2 and R^3 is a hydrogen atom.

7. The compound according to claim 5, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, wherein R^2 and R^3 are a hydrogen atom.

8. The compound according to claim 7, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, wherein

each of R^4 and R^5 is independently a hydrogen atom or a

lower alkyl group; and R^6 is a lower alkyl group.

9. The compound according to claim 7, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, wherein

R^4 is a hydrogen atom; and

each of R^5 and R^6 is independently a lower alkyl group.

10. The compound according to claim 7, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, wherein

R^4, R^5 and R^6 are a hydrogen atom; and

R^8 is a halogen atom, a lower alkyl group, a lower alkoxy group, or a di(lower alkyl)amino group.

11. The compound according to claim 7, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, wherein

R^4, R^5 and R^6 are a hydrogen atom; and

R^8 is a lower alkyl group.

12. The compound according to claim 1, a lower alkyl ester thereof, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, selected from the group consisting of

4'-{2-[(1S,2R)-2-hydroxy-2-(4-hydroxy-3-methanesulfonylaminophenyl)-1-methylethylamino]ethoxy}-3',5'-dimethylbiphenyl-4-carboxylic acid;

4'-{2-[(1S,2R)-2-hydroxy-2-(4-hydroxy-3-methanesulfonylaminophenyl)-1-methylethylamino]ethoxy}biphenyl-4-carboxylic acid;

4'-{2-[(R)-2-hydroxy-2-(4-hydroxy-3-methanesulfonyl-aminophenyl)ethylamino]ethoxy}-2',6'-dimethylbiphenyl-4-carboxylic acid;

(4'-{2-[(1S,2R)-2-hydroxy-2-(4-hydroxy-3-methane-sulfonylaminophenyl)-1-methylethylamino]ethoxy}-3',5'-dimethylbiphenyl-4-yloxy)acetic acid;

4'-{2-[(1S,2R)-2-hydroxy-2-(4-hydroxy-3-methane-sulfonylaminophenyl)-1-methylethylamino]ethoxy}-2',6'-dimethylbiphenyl-4-carboxylic acid;

(4'-{2-[(1S,2R)-2-hydroxy-2-(4-hydroxy-3-methane-sulfonylaminophenyl)-1-methylethylamino]ethoxy}-2',6'-dimethylbiphenyl-4-yloxy)acetic acid;

4'-{2-[(R)-2-hydroxy-2-(4-hydroxy-3-methanesulfonyl-aminophenyl)ethylamino]ethoxy}-2-methylbiphenyl-4-carboxylic acid;

4'-{2-[(R)-2-hydroxy-2-(4-hydroxy-3-methanesulfonyl-aminophenyl)ethylamino]ethoxy}biphenyl-3,4-dicarboxylic acid;

3-(N,N-dimethylamino)-4'-{2-[(R)-2-hydroxy-2-(4-hydroxy-3-methanesulfonylaminophenyl)ethylamino]ethoxy}-biphenyl-4-carboxylic acid;

3-ethoxy-4'-{2-[(R)-2-hydroxy-2-(4-hydroxy-3-methane-sulfonylaminophenyl)ethylamino]ethoxy}biphenyl-4-carboxylic acid;

4'-{2-[(R)-2-hydroxy-2-(4-hydroxy-3-methanesulfonyl-aminophenyl)ethylamino]ethoxy}biphenyl-4-carboxylic acid;

4'-{2-[(R)-2-hydroxy-3-(2-oxo-2,3-dihydro-1H-

benzimidazol-4-yloxy)propylamino]ethoxy}-3',5'-dimethyl-biphenyl-4-carboxylic acid; and

4'-{2-[(R)-2-hydroxy-3-(2-oxo-2,3-dihydro-1H-benzimidazol-4-yloxy)propylamino]ethoxy}-3-isopropyl-3',5'-dimethylbiphenyl-4-carboxylic acid.

13. A pharmaceutical composition which comprises, as an active ingredient, a compound according to any one of claims 1 to 12 or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

14. A therapeutic or prophylactic agent for obesity, diabetes mellitus, hyperlipidemia, depression, urinary dysfunctions, diseases caused by biliary calculus or biliary tract hypermotility, or diseases caused by intestinal hypermotility, which comprises, as an active ingredient, a compound according to any one of claims 1 to 12 or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

15. A pharmaceutical combination comprising a compound according to any one of claims 1 to 12 or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof and at least one selected from the group consisting of an antiobesity agent, an antidiabetic agent, a hypolipidemic agent and a therapeutic agent for urinary dysfunctions other than a β3-adrenoceptor agonist.

16. A use of a compound according to any one of claims 1 to 12 or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof for the

manufacture of a medicament for treating or preventing obesity, diabetes mellitus, hyperlipidemia, depression, urinary dysfunctions, diseases caused by biliary calculus or biliary tract hypermotility, or diseases caused by intestinal hypermotility.

17. A method for treating or preventing obesity, diabetes mellitus, hyperlipidemia, depression, urinary dysfunctions, diseases caused by biliary calculus or biliary tract hypermotility, or diseases caused by intestinal hypermotility, which comprises administering an effective amount of a compound according to any one of claims 1 to 12 or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.